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ABSTRACT

Three dictionaries are compared for their usefulness to teachers of English as a foreign language, teachers in training, students, and other users of English as a foreign language. The issue of monolingual versus bilingual dictionary format is discussed, and a previous analysis of the two bilingual dictionaries is summarized. Pronunciation symbols, use of the syntactic codes, and problems of lexical collocation are examined. The "Longman Lexicon" is considered separately, and several earlier reviews and criticisms are addressed. It is concluded that the "Lexicon" has uses for the student and teacher that go beyond the capabilities of the dictionaries and many other references. (MSE)

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WHAT DICTIONARY TO USE?

A close look at the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English and the Longman Lexicon of Contemporary English

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Introduction

As Randolph Quirk says in his preface to the Longman dictionary, the central task of dictionary makers is the "sensitive anticipation of the users' needs" and "devising the best way of satisfying them." "Users" in Mexico (as elsewhere) will include teachers of English in training and practising teachers, as well as both students and users of English as a foreign language. Some of the teachers will be native speakers, and many will not.

This article will attempt to consider the two dictionaries under review in relation to the needs of all these four categories of users. The perspective will, however, be that of the teacher, since most Journal readers are teachers. The questions the teacher is likely to ask about these dictionaries are the following:

1. Will I or my students benefit from the use of such monolingual dictionaries for the foreign learner, or would their needs be better served by a bilingual dictionary, or an ordinary monolingual dictionary?

2. Assuming that dictionaries such as the two under review are considered desirable, which one should we advise our students to buy?

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The final part of this article considers the Longman Lexicon of Contemporary English.

Monolingual versus bilingual dictionaries

Many readers will no doubt share my somewhat guilty feeling when recommending monolingual dictionaries to teachers and students while we ourselves prefer to use bilingual ones. Are we not happier when we feel we have found a native-language equivalent, or near-equivalent, to serve at least as a starting point for getting to know the foreign word? Even if we use a monolingual dictionary, are we not constantly searching in our minds for an equivalent in our own language? Well, very often yes, we are. I personally would prefer, other things being equal, a bilingual dictionary - with, of course, the necessary contrastive information!

The problem, however, is not so simple. Firstly, bilingual dictionaries tend to be very haphazard in the contrastive information they provide on meaning (i.e. information about the differences in meaning of the supposed equivalents). But secondly, and more important, they do not give a fraction of the kinds of information about the grammatical behavior (Can it take one or two objects? What preposition does it take? Can this adjective be used attributively, or only predicatively? - etc.) which both of the dictionaries provide in abundance, based, in the case of Longman's, on a large body of authoritative linguistic research into actual written and spoken usage, namely the SEU, Survey of English Usage, carried out at University College London under the guidance of Randolph Quirk (see Ilsen, 1982 and Haegeman, 1982). Nor do they give the vital information about usage (formal, informal, taboo or slang, regional, technical, etc.) in which both dictionaries, especially the Longman one, excel. All of these kinds of information are extremely important to the foreign learner and are not easy to find elsewhere. Even a good grammar will only incidentally contain information about the grammatical behaviour of individual words, in its examples; many words will inevitably be omitted.

The Oxford and Longman dictionaries for foreign learners versus other monolingual dictionaries

This question is discussed in detail by Richard Yorkey in his excellent review of desk dictionaries (1969; see also, 1974). In general, the conclusion is that the rival dictionaries considered contain very little of value to the foreign learner which is not also available in those under review, and that they are also lacking in the kind of vital information on grammar and usage which we have discussed above. Perhaps even more important, the language of the definitions is not rigorously controlled, as it is in the Longman, and to a slightly lesser extent in the Oxford.

Oxford or Longman?

We have concluded that neither available bilingual dictionaries nor conventional monolingual dictionaires offer the users we have in mind anything like the advantages of the two under review. We are left with the task of comparing the two and deciding whether either or both are to be recommended for our purposes, and, if both, whether one is greatly or marginally to be preferred.

Fortunately, a great deal of the work of comparison has been competently done and lucidly presented by Richard Yorkey in his review article (1979) comparing these two dictionaries. We therefore propose to give his conclusions, with which we agree, and to discuss those aspects which we consider of particular interest.

Yorkey's conclusion:

Yorkey concludes that "The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English is the most complete and useful dictionary for ESL students now available. Though the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English is excellent and equal to the Longman in many ways, I prefer the Longman because of its controlled defining vocabulary, its contextualized and many interesting illustrative sentences (sic), its practical guidance in the usage notes, its emphasis on spoken as well as written English, and its wide coverage of American

English."The last point is an important one in Mexico, especially in view of the fact that there is no comparable American dictionary on the market.

Though we strongly recommend Yorkey's article, we include here a brief summary of his more detailed findings for those who may not have immediate access to the TESOL Quarterly in which it appeared:

Controlled vocabulary: While Oxford simplifies the language of its definitions intuitively, Longman keeps rigorously to a controlled vocabulary of 2000 words, listed in an appendix. When a word outside this cannot be avoided, it is indicated, so that the reader may look up the word in its own entry.

Words listed: About one third of "standard collegiate desk dictionaries," which appears adequate for ESL students in a university who get the technical terms elsewhere.

Phrasal verbs: On a spot check, Longman gave more, with more meanings.

Syntactic codes (see further discussion in section 4.3): Probably too complex and tiresome for most students (though special training may help), but "valuable for teachers of ESL."

Usage: A special feature of the Longman. Many students may not even notice, but potentially very useful for teachers and students.

Contemporary English: Both dictionaries came out quite well, but Longman is much better on "current campus usage" (eg. "crash pad, rip off, " etc.)

American English: Longman much more complete and consistent.

Registers and labels (i.e. regional usages and stylistic values):

Oxford's explanation is good, but Longman uses its 'labels' more frequently and consistently, and also includes more taboo words.

Foreign words, cultural references and idioms: ("Cultural references" e.g. Robin Hood, Mrs. Malaprop, Hobson's Choice, Uncle Sam, Uncle Tom.)Longman is much more complete in this respect.

Illustrations: While Oxford offers more variety of types of illustrations, Longman is more complete.

Appendices: Both include irregular verbs, weights and measures, and military ranks. Oxford has forenames and 'pet' names, works of Shakespeare, books of the Bible, and an excellent section on affixes. Longman has a family tree (relationships), and a table of countries/adjectives/inhabitants/languages. Unfortunately, this table is without a pronunciation guide - a problem, since many of these words are not given in the main entries either. Whereas British, German and Spanish are given, Chadian, Tanzanian, and - dare I say it? - Mexican, are not.)

In the next part of this article, we propose to discuss firstly, very briefly, one or two points about the pronunciation symbols in these two dictionaries, and then, at greater length, questions relating to their use of the syntactic codes and to the ease of reference of various types of collocation, from the point of view of the user.

Pronunciation symbols

Here I would like to mention one matter for American speakers and one for British. The chart in the Longman (inside cover) includes the two symbols /ɔ/ AmE 'form', and /o/ AmE 'port' (/o/ is not included at all in the pronunciation symbol chart ("Main symbols"), nor in the spelling table (p. 1293). There is an explanation, according to which 'horse' is /hɔrs/, and 'hoarse' is /hors/, and 'court' can be pronounced with either. (I have to admit I had an Irish teacher of Latin who used to ridicule our pathetic English inability to distinguish between these two words.) How many readers can assign the following words to one or the other: fourth, warm, stork, core, pour,

porphyry?

The other point, for British speakers, is the exclusive use in the Longman of the symbol /ʊə/ for words such as 'poor, moor, sure', given as alternatives in the Oxford for the surely (/ʃɔ: lɪ/!) more common pronunciation with /ɔ:/ - more common, that is at least among the younger generations, to the extent that when Bertrand Russell (in a comic impersonation) addresses his fellow philosopher Moore as /mʊə/, everyone is expected to laugh.

There are, however, small points, as is the failure to include the American pronunciation of 'often' or 'dog' with /ɑ:/, or indicate that the pronunciation of 'either' with /i:/ is the more common one in American English.

The actual choice of phonetic symbols in the Longman, a maximally distinguishing system, with both length marks and different symbols for such pairs as /ɪ/ and /i:/, /ʊ/ and /u:/, /ə/ and /ɜ:/, may possibly be criticized precisely because it uses a greater number of exotic symbols than is strictly inevitable. However, such a maximally distinguishing system does draw students' (and teachers') attention to the fact that differences are of quality and not only of quantity (length). Furthermore, no system could possibly correspond to all those the students might meet in textbooks or other works of reference.

Use of the syntactic codes

Most readers will agree that a dictionary should be useful for reference in productive as well as receptive language uses: that is, it should give users as much help as possible in using words, not merely understanding them. Information about 'verb patterns' may not, at least for Spanish speakers, often be necessary for understanding (the difference between "I want you to eat" and "I want to eat you," being a rare and perhaps frivolous exception), but it is often vital if errors ("I want that you eat," "He told me that....", are to be avoided. As I have already mentioned, this kind of information (information about the grammatical behaviour of lexical items in general) is not really available anywhere else, at least not with any

degree of completeness.

Both dictionaries give this kind of information. The Longman, however, offers certain advantages. First of all it draws on more up-to-date grammatical research (Survey of English Usage, mentioned above), and is both more sophisticated and more comprehensive. The main point is perhaps the fact that it gives more information about the syntactic behavior of nouns, adjectives and adverbs, as well as verbs; while the Oxford concentrates mainly on Hornby's original pioneering verb patterns (this is in no way to deny their tremendous usefulness). One may perhaps feel that the greater sophistication of the Longman may make it less accessible to students. I would however venture the opinion, unsupported I have to admit, that those who are capable of mastering and using the Oxford system should, with a little more effort perhaps, be able to manage the Longman system. If they can, I certainly feel it will bring them greater benefits (the table inside the back cover of the Longman for easy reference being only one of these benefits).

The main question is whether students (or the majority of teachers) can be trained to make use of this type of information. Yorkey (1979 : 396) gives an impressive example of the complexity of information a student must "remember (and understand!)" in order to use the Longman:

TABLE 1

T = verbs, many of which are TRANSITIVES, that are followed by a noun or noun-like expression in position III as a DIRECT OBJECT which does not represent (REFER TO) the subject, unless REFLEXIVE (....)

1 = means that a verb is followed by a noun-like expression in position III L1; T1 or 2 noun-like expressions in position III and IV D1 ; X1.

5 = means that a word is followed by that + a CLAUSE...(...)

a = means that the word that can be left out between a word and a following CLAUSE (...)

He concludes that, "unless they have had specific classroom instruction in how to use this dictionary, most would not bother to read (perhaps not even notice) the cryptic code at the beginning of the entry," though he seems to feel more confidence in teachers. I would certainly feel that a great many teachers will react in the same way as students, unless they, too, have "specific classroom instruction."

Anecdotal evidence would suggest that at least some students (and therefore presumably teachers) can benefit from classroom training in the interpretation of the codes. A major problem is likely to be that many teachers and teacher trainers will feel they cannot spare the considerable investment of time this type of instruction will require if it is to be successful. I would however suggest that such work, if properly done, is likely to bear fruit far beyond the activity of 'dictionary' use: it is likely to contribute enormously to the students' whole understanding of the way in which languages, and of course English in particular, work, and of the ways in which foreign languages may differ from one's native language. This is a point I cannot put too strongly: the benefits include a sensitization to the workings of language which will in addition to simply helping the student to make use of the invaluable information contained in the dictionary, enable him to develop tremendously his ability to learn from observation of the language use to which he is exposed - to note, for example, that the verb of 'want to+infinitive' is almost the same as the Spanish pattern (apart from the 'to'), but that 'to want someone to do something' is radically different; to be more sensitive to prepositions and other constructions used after nouns or adjectives ('eager to do something', 'desirous of doing something', etc.). One could give many more examples. My main point is an impassioned plea for this kind of work to be given considerable time and attention in language courses as a vital contribution to enabling the student not only to use the dictionary (important enough in itself), but also to use his exposure to language to learn <u>for himself</u>, surely our most sacred aim.

The exercises accompanying the Longman (Jane Whitcut, "Learning with LDOCE") should certainly be useful as a first introduction to the dictionary, but teachers may find that the most useful work done is during the students' actual oral or written composition work (planned

oral composition such as lecturettes) and in the course of work on their actual errors (in combination, for example, with such techniques as 'hot cards' - see Daniels and Packard, 1982). The exercises accompanying the Oxford dictionary have a more attractive format than the Longman ones, but it is disappointing that there are none on the verb patterns. Does this show a lack of conviction in this aspect of the dictionary?

Lexical collocations

Another major problem area with which most dictionaries give little systematic help is that of 'collocations'. Why, for example, do we say, "plantear un problema" in Spanish, and to "raise/state/pose" (but not "plant") a problem in English? "Aprobar un examen," but "pass" (not "approve") an exam? Often words of very similar meaning and stylistic value to those actually used (e.g. "He has succeeded in his exam") are not acceptable, or seem strange, simply because we are so used to hearing the conventional combination. An interesting distinction might be made between collocations of the above kind on the one hand, and clichés, which we actually avoid because they are too conventional, on the other.

Our purpose in this section is to see to what extent the dictionaries provide this information in the form in which the non-native user is most likely to seek it. For example, it seems most logical to look for the verbs which collocate with "problem" or "exam" rather than to look for nouns which collocate with "raise," "pass," etc., though one might perhaps be glad of both kinds of help. In the case of "red-hot" the user would surely be looking for an intensifier of "hot," for if he heard the expression or met it in his reading he would most likely understand it and would hardly be impelled to look it up in the dictionary. One would wish to find "work like a Trojan" under "work," not "Trojan," and "as light as a feather" under "light" rather than "feather." What a shame the dictionaries so frequently take the opposite view. The following tables (2-5), based on spot checks using random examples, illustrate this point, and they are discussed in the subsequent text:

TABLE 2

Collocation	Main components	Under which component listed in:	
		Longman	Oxford
Ask a question	Question	✓	✓
	Ask	✓	✓
Take/pass/fail an exam	Exam	✗	✗
	Take	✗	✓
	Pass	✓ (test)	✓
	Fail	✓	✓ (+pass)
Make a mistake	Mistake	✓	✓
	Make	✗	✗
Make/suspend payment(s)	Payment	✗	✗
	Make	✗	✗
	Suspend	✗	✓
Draw up/sign/enter into an agreement	Agreement	✗	(make✓, sign✓ etc)
	Draw up	✗	✗ (contract✓)
	Sign	✗	✗
	Enter into	✗	✗
At (a) great/tremendous/break-neck speed	Speed	✗	✗ (full✓ top✓)
	Great	✗	✗
	Tremendous	✓	✓
	Breakneck	✓	✓
High/good/poor quality	Quality	✗ (low✓)	✗ (poor✓)
	High	✗	✗
	Good	✗	✗
	Poor	✗	✗
Win/gain a/the victory	Victory	✗	✓
	Win	✓	✗
	Gain	✗	✗

TABLE 3			
Ice-cold	Cold	✗	✗
	Ice	✓ (ice-cold)	✗
Red-hot	Hot	✗	✗
	Red	✓ (red-hot)	✓

TABLE 3 cont. Collocation	Main components	Under which component listed in: Longman	Oxford
Rock-solid	Solid	✗	✗
	Rock	✗	✗
Brand-new	New	✗	✗
	Brand	✓ (brand-new)	✓

TABLE 4			
As hungry as a horse	Hungry	✗	✗
	Horse	✗	✗
As fast/quick as lightning	Fast	✗	✗
	Quick	✗	✓
	Lightning	✗	✗
As heavy as lead	Heavy	✗	✗
	Lead	✗	✗
As light as a feather	Light	✓	✓
	Feather	✓	✓
As sure as fate	Sure	✗	✓
	Fate	✓	✓
As steady as a rock	Steady	✗	✗
	Rock	✓	✗ (firm✓ solid✓)

TABLE 5			
Work like a Trojan	Work	✗	✗
	Trojan	✓	✓
Drink like a fish	Drink	✓	✗
	Fish	✓	✗
Eat like a horse	Eat	✗	✗
	Horse	✓	✓
Fight like cats	Fight	✗	✗
	Cats	✗	✗
Swear like a trooper	Swear	✗	✗
	Trooper	✓	✓

Discussion of Tables 2 - 5: Table 2 confirms our point, though not as overwhelmingly as some of the others. Of this group, the Longman only lists two of the collocations under the word under which the student would be most likely to look for it (which we here refer to as the 'main' word): "to ask a question," and "to make a mistake" (2 out of 8). The Oxford does better with 4 out of 8. In the case of the "subsidiary words" (the collocating words which the student would be looking for, and where he would therefore be unable to look them up), the score is higher in the Longman (6 out of 18) than under the main word - just the wrong way round. In the case of the Oxford, a higher proportion are given under the main word: 4 out of 8 under the main word (50%), and 7 out of 18 under the subsidiary word (about 40%). Thus, neither dictionary shows any consistency. We may represent the results of Table 2 as follows: (L = Longman, O = Oxford):

	TOTAL	YES		NO		
		L	O	L	O	
Main*:	8	2	4	6	4	(Oxford better)
Subsidiary*:	18	6	7	12	11	

(*Main = main words: in the case of the 'Total' column, this means number of main words; in the case of the 'yes' column, it means number of cases in which the collocation is listed under the main word; in the case of the 'no' column, cases where it is not listed.
Subsidiary - subsidiary words. (Interpret columns as with 'main.')

In the case of Table 3, not one of the collocations is listed in either dictionary where it would be needed, though some are listed under the subsidiaries:

	TOTAL	YES		NO	
		L	O	L	O
Main:	4	0	0	4	4
Subsidiary:	4	3	2	1	2

In Table 4, the Oxford comes off somewhat better in the 'main' entries, with 3 out of 7, as against Longman's 1 out of 7:

	TOTAL	YES		NO		
		L	O	L	O	
Main:	7	1	3	6	4	(Oxford better)
Subsidiary:	6	3	2	3	4	

Table 5 is similar to Table 3: none of the Oxford entries, and only one of the Longman entries, come under the 'main' word:

	TOTAL	YES		NO		
		L	O	L	O	
Main:	5	1	0	4	5	(Longman
Subsidiary:	5	4	3	1	2	marginally better)

Discussion of Table 6: Table 6 (below) poses a different problem. English is peculiar (though not unique) in the role played by phrasal verbs, which for our present purposes we may regard as consisting of verb+preposition (e.g. 'put into'); verb+adverbial (e.g. 'come in'); or a combination of these (e.g. 'keep up with'). In some cases their meaning is quite clear ('come in'); in others it may be anything but clear to a non-native ('drop in sometime'). Many speakers of other languages may find it easier to remember the often less frequently used single-word expressions - 'enter' for 'go in,' and so on. It therefore seems to be a good idea that dictionaries for non-natives should include the "phrasal verb" under the entry for the "single-word verb." These are labelled "dictionary headword" in the table. It may be noted that one or two of these do also require a preposition, e.g. 'arrive at.' It will be noted from the table that both dictionaries are quite helpful in this respect:

TABLE 6:

Phrasal Verbs (includes 'prepositional' verbs)	Dictionary Headwords	Whether phrasal verb given under headword	
		Longman	Oxford
Put in	Insert	✓	✓
Take out	Extract	✓	✓
Go in (-to)	Enter	✓	✓
Go out	Exit	✓	✓
Get to	Arrive (at/in)	✗	✗
	Reach	✓	✓
Come to (+noun)	Arrive (at/in	✓(decision)	✗
	Reach	✗	✗
Do up (house, etc)	Redecorate	✗	✗
	Improve	✗	✗
Look for	Seek	✓	✓
Keep back	Withhold	✓	✓
Change (into)	Convert (into)	✓	✓
Find out	Discover	✓	✓
Put off	Postpone	✗	✓

General conclusions on Tables 2 - 6: The results described suggest that there is no clear policy on collocations of the above kinds, or at least no recognition of the circumstances in which, in my view, the student would most need to look them up. Since in many cases the collocations are listed where they are less likely to be needed, it would not appear to be a question of space.

This criticism is obviously not of sufficient importance to outweigh the tremendous contribution of both dictionaries, but it does suggest a way in which they could be made even more valuable in the future.

Longman Lexicon of Contemporary English

The patient reader - and how much more the impatient one - may well ask how, after an already overblown review of the two dictionaries in question, I can so shamelessly embark on yet another. Perhaps the main reason is that I did not want to let this book, which, in the opinion of Fox and Mahood (1982b:277), "Many people will find ...an excellent book" (myself included), slip through my 'avaricious/mean/miserly/mercenary/grasping/selfish/greedy' (Lexicon) or indeed 'over-economical/over-frugal/money-conscious/penny-wise/mean/mingy/stingy/near/close/tight/sparing/pinching/scraping/scrimping/rapacious,' not to say 'venal' (Roget) reviewer's fingers. The difference being that while Roget's vocabulary is rich to the degree of near-obscenity ('lickpenny, money-grubber, muckworm, pinchfist, tightway...'), he does not give you any information at all to help you distinguish (except for parts of speech), while McArthur (author of the Longman Lexicon) gives meanings, stylistic and grammatical information and examples for his more modest (parsimonious/niggardly?) list (15,000 words in all, as opposed to Roget's 50,000 odd). Thus, for most non-native speakers, unless their knowledge of the language is already near-native, the McArthur is the most likely choice.

To unlock this Pandora's box of word-power, one only has to turn to the index and look up any reasonably common word (in the above case, 'avaricious'). Under 'avaricious' I found in the McArthur the indication F180. On turning to F180, I found the words given in the examples above, together with their dictionary definitions (in the same limited 'defining vocabulary' as the Longman dictionary); grammatical information (syntactical patterning, countability, etc., again same as in the dictionary); stylistic information (e.g. "greedy - usually derogatory," "mercenary - usually deprec."); related adverbs, nouns, etc. ('greed - greedily - greediness').

Clearly the main use of the McArthur is for the non-native, unable to make full use of the Roget, who needs more help, and who is looking for a synonym or a hyponym (see below). In the case of a synonym, we are simply looking for a word of equivalent or similar

meaning, as in the example we have of "avaricious." In the case of a hyponym, we are looking for a word in a given lexical set or area. For example, if we want to know what a given part of a car is called, we just look up "car," which comes in a large section called "Movement, Location, Travel, and Transport," and in subsections (according to the index) M93, M106 and M108. It is unfortunate that because the word car does not occur in them, the index does not mention subsections M100 (labeled picture of the outside of a car), and M101 and 102 (the inside, engine and chassis). Happily, you stumble on them because they are next door. Or perhaps you wish to learn the names of flowers (A158), trees (A155-6), nuts (A153), etc. Just turn to the illustrated sections (more about the illustrations below). Useful, then, also for the study of certain kinds of vocabulary.

The Lexicon can also serve as a dictionary for looking up words we do not know, but, since we have to carry out two operations (first index, then subsection), it is less satisfactory than a dictionary for this purpose.

I have already quoted Fox and Mahood's review of this work (1982b). They also include it in another survey (1982a). The same issue of the ELT Journal also includes an interesting and painstaking review by Jeffries and Willis (1982). The former is based on practical experience with students, and is broadly favorable. I disagree with their view that this is "neither the tome(sic) or place" for the grammatical information, though of course they may be right. While agreeing for practical purposes with most of their favorable judgements, I cannot accept that the "illustrations are clear and unfussy" - unfussy perhaps, but hardly clear in most cases. It is often impossible for someone who does not half know a word anyway to see what part of the picture it refers to - even the arrows are often quite inadequate. For example, in the picture of a church on page 165, the arrow for 'belfry' points straight at the window of the belfry, and might be taken to mean 'window.' It is not easy to see how this could be avoided simply, but it does mar the usefulness of some of the pictures. One may also question the value of pictures of fruit, vegetables, flowers, etc. without color. In some cases the pictures seem just too small to be useful (pace Ogden Nash "...there comes a day when your eyes are alright but your arm isn't long enough to hold the tele-

phone book where you can read it."): for example, the choke in the car in M101 is visible only as a minute dark disk on the dashboard, and could be almost anything. But many of the simpler pictures and diagrams are indeed clear, and while this is a feature Longman might well think of improving, it affects too few items to be a really serious defect.

I would also question the view of Fox and Mahood that justice is really consistently done to U.S. English: the parts of the car are well served, but the meat cuts are unrepentantly British (p. 219), and the "meal-times" only even pretend to be British.

But the most important part of their review is the judgment of the eight advanced students who used the book, and who, with the exception of one who could not see what the book was for, commented on its usefulness for composition, translation and vocabulary enrichment.

The Jeffries and Willis review (1982) takes a more theoretical view, and a more critical one. They speak of a "failure to re-examine basic aspects of lexical structure" which "must detract from the value of an otherwise enterprising and attractive attempt to meet a genuine reference need." I feel that this judgment is over-harsh because it does not sufficiently emphasize the fact that, in spite of the undoubted flaws they mention, the work remains extremely useful. However, their discussion is interesting, and I would like to consider briefly some of the points they raise.

Use of the word "general" in the index: In giving the different meanings of the words in the index, in order to direct the reader to the appropriate section, the word "general" is sometimes used to refer to what is regarded as the most basic or least specialized meaning. In the case of "fall," we have "general (verb)," "general noun" ("autumn") and "become" (as in the phrase, "fall ill"). Some other words where this occurs are "accompany/-iment/accusation/acidity/acquisition/act/adapt/addition/adore/alcohol/allotment." As Jeffries and Willis point out, this may not be very helpful to a non-native user who is not anyway too clear about the meanings. But the solution may not be easy to find: the reader may care to suggest a

better alternative for the examples I have just given. (Roget's "descent" for this meaning (?) of "fall" suggests a far more dignified mode of progress, and may indeed mislead the unwary.)

Circular (and uncoordinated) definitions: The authors quote the example of "lessen" ("to become or make less") and "reduce" ("often formal, to cause to become smaller or less"), citing the Longman Dictionary of Scientific Usage as giving better guidance on the usage of these two words. But in general, they concede, the stylistic information is helpful.

Antonyms -cross-referencing and polysemy: The fact that antonyms (opposites) are not cross-referenced is criticized, and it is noted that they do not always occur together. "Maximum" and "minimum" do; "increase" and "decrease" do not. The authors point out that antonyms are a good way of showing the different senses of words (e.g. rise - fall/sink/set), and imply that greater exploitation of antonymy would enhance the value of the work. (If I may be permitted just one more bit of Ogden Nash: "Should you ask me when Chicago was founded I could only reply I didn't even know it was losted" - my underlining).

Hyponymy (words in the same lexical field): In some cases, the authors note, the classes are too broad to cover the groups of "co-hyponyms." For example, "skin/peel/rind/husk/peel/shell/pod" all come in the more general class of "Fruit and Seed"; whereas they would be better in a visual display on their own, under some such heading as "coverings," to make clearer their relationships. In other cases, they feel that words have been actually misclassified. For example, the word "glance" in "the glasses glanced in the fire-light" is misplaced with the verbs of "looking" - "look/glance/glimpse/see," etc.

Conclusions

I accept these criticisms as suggesting problems which might usefully be worked on for a future edition, and whose solution might

prove a real contribution to the art of lexicography. But, as I have already said, I feel that they do not alter the fact that the Lexicon is an extremely useful work as it stands. It performs functions which no dictionary can, and it performs them in a way no other existing work can rival. It is also based on the same body of research as the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, namely the Survey of English Usage. It is on the whole clear in its instructions and layout and should, as Fox and Mahood suggest (1982b), prove useful, certainly to advanced and upper intermediate students and probably to intermediate students, and of course, last but not least, to teachers.

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